

Lesson in Love

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"Alonzo Solace, what are you doing?" Julia Heller sputtered loudly in protest when the pilot led her into the cave and switched on his lumalight. "We can't just disappear from camp like this! Devon will worry."

"Relax, Doc," Alonzo called back over his shoulder, pulling her after him into one of the tunnels that opened up from the cave. "I told Danziger where we're going."

"And where *are* we going?" Julia inquired.

Alonzo stopped and turned. He took her chin, tilting her head back slightly so her bright blue eyes met his. "Do you trust me?" he asked, smiling but with a serious note in his voice.

"Yes, of course," Julia replied without hesitation.

Alonzo's smile widened. "Good," he grinned and bent his head to cover her mouth for a deep, exploring kiss. Just when she was about to run out of breath, he withdrew and turned away. He again took her hand and pulled her after him.

He led her through a maze of tunnels, the only light the glow of the lumalamp. Soon, Julia lost track of the many turns they took, one tunnel leading to another.

"I sure hope you know what you're doing," she muttered, real concern creeping into her voice despite her earlier declaration of trust.

"Watch your head," Alonzo warned. He stepped aside to reveal a low opening in the tunnel wall, the opening glowing orange against the otherwise dark tunnel wall. "Right through here," he motioned, illuminating her way with the lamp.

Cautiously, Julia stepped through the narrow opening and entered a large chamber.

The chamber was huge, the ceiling almost fading in the darkness overhead. Along the walls, thick veins of Morganite glowed and pulsed with the heat and energy they transported. At the far end of the room, a small subterranean lake gurgled and steamed quietly. The sunstones lining the bottom lent the water an amber cast.

"Oh my God," Julia gasped in surprise. Alonzo had followed her through the opening and with a grand sweep of his arms he took in the whole room.

"Tadaaaa!" he said proudly. "Danziger and I discovered it yesterday, when we were exploring the caves." The sunstones were bright enough to illuminate the room so Alonzo switched off the lumalamp.

Slowly, Julia wandered deeper into the room, towards the lake. The floor of the chamber was smooth, the rocky surface gleaming dully in the Morganite glow. "What is this place?" she asked quietly, turning back at Alonzo. "Is it another Mooncross pool?"

"No," Alonzo shook his head. "It's a natural spring. And they won't mind if we use it for a lavishly long bath..." His voice trailed off and a wide grin full of meaning broke on his face.

She stared at him for a moment, confused. "Oh," she said, blushing lightly when she got his meaning. "We can't just jump in," Julia attempted to ward off the inevitable. "We don't know what's in there." Alonzo put his fingers to her lips.

"Shh. It's safe, it's plain water. I took a sample last night and had Yale test it. It's slightly salty because of a high concentration of minerals but that's all. Should be good for the skin."

His hand trailed from her lips to her neck, pushing her hair aside. He lowered his head and put light kisses on the sensitive spot just below her ear. Shivers ran along her spine at the feathery touch of his lips on her skin. Julia felt her knees go weak and she threw her arms around his neck for support.

Alonzo drew away from her ear and his mouth found hers, his tongue gently probing until she parted her lips slightly, allowing him access.

While he explored her mouth, his hands slowly traveled across her

back, stroking along her spine in leisurely movements, caressing her through the fabric of her shirt. At last Julia had to pull back her head slightly, gasping for air.

She lifted her eyes to meet his. They were dark with desire, a reflection of her own passion. "'Lonzo,'" Julia murmured throatily, putting all her feelings into that one word. Her fingers wrapped in his dark hair, stroking the nape of his neck.

Alonzo moved his hands away from her back, gliding over her shoulders, keeping his eyes locked with hers. Worlds of meaning were conveyed wordlessly while his fingers, trembling now, found the top button of her shirt. He fumbled to undo the tiny button. Julia disentangled her hands from his hair to help him but a quick shake of his head stopped her. "Don't," Alonzo whispered huskily, bending forward slightly to nibble on her earlobe. "Keep still. Let me."

Unhurriedly, his hands unbuttoned her shirt, one button at the time. His fingers grazed her skin lightly and Julia moaned softly, forcing her knees to steady and keep her up. His hands slipped underneath the collar of her shirt, slowly pushing it over her shoulders and down her arms, his fingers a gentle caress on her skin. The shirt dropped from her limp hands and fell to the floor at her feet. With a quick flick of his wrist he undid the clasp and shortly her bra joined the shirt in an untidy heap.

Alonzo inhaled sharply, hissing through his teeth. "Julia, my Julia," he said, his voice a hoarse whisper. "You are so beautiful..."

Julia closed her eyes and shuddered involuntarily when his hands began to explore the curves of her body. Alonzo lowered his head, leaving a trail of kisses along her jaw, her throat, and down to her breasts. He nibbled lightly on her nipples, first left, then right, before he knelt in front of her. Julia whimpered with desire and could no longer hold still. She grabbed his hair, wrapping her fingers in the dark locks tightly and made sure he wouldn't pull back.

Alonzo kissed her stomach, his tongue drawing lazy circles around her belly button. His hands longingly explored the trail his kisses had left and finally ended on the zipper of her pants. He drew the zipper down, tooth by metal tooth and Julia shivered in anticipation. Slowly, Alonzo tugged at the garment, pushing it down along her legs. His hands softly stroked her thighs; with his nails he mildly grazed the sensitive skin at the back of her knees, sending ripples of desire along the nerve ends just below.

A light tap on her calves made her step out of the pants and wordlessly he helped her lower herself into the steaming pool. His breathing came in ragged gasps and she absently admired his self-control. Julia drew a quick breath as the warm water engulfed her, the minerals tingling on her sensitized skin.

"Ah," Julia sighed when she submerged herself until only her head was above the surface. The small lake had two levels; she found herself standing in the shallower part. It was just deep enough for her to stand comfortably while still being mostly submerged. The other part of the pool seemed a lot deeper. The veins of Morganite showed in its

depths, giving off their heat to the water and making it steam in the slightly cooler cavern air. Absently Julia wondered what would happen if she inadvertently stepped on a vein; her thoughts were interrupted when Alonzo gingerly lowered himself next to her, having quickly shed his own clothes.

He echoed her sigh of contentment, then drew her to him, his hands slippery on the wet skin of her bare arms. She tilted her head back, lips parted in invitation. He didn't need more encouragement; his lips met hers in a long, urgent kiss.

Their bodies pressed together. Julia could feel his hard chest muscles tighten as he lifted her up. She wrapped her legs around his waist, riding his hips while Alonzo moved his hands to her buttocks to support her weight.

His skin was as slick as hers was and she had to cling to him tightly to keep from slipping down. When they joined, two bodies merging to one, Julia gasped, forgetting to breathe for a long second. Instinct kicked in and she drew a long, shuddering breath. Slowly, they began to move, the water carrying some of their weight. Faster and faster they moved, catching their rhythm and pushing each other to the heights of passion.

Julia threw her head back, closing her eyes. Waves of pleasure shot through her body. When she reached the height of ecstasy, she cried out involuntarily. Only a second later, Alonzo joined her, their voices echoing through the chamber.

Finally the spasms of their climax faded and Julia slumped against Alonzo's chest, resting her cheek against his heart. Utterly fulfilled, she listened to his heart as it slowed back down to a regular rhythm. When she had caught her breath she pulled back a little, opening her eyes to look at him--

Julia yelped in shocked surprise. Near the edge of the pool, half a dozen Terrians crouched motionless, their heads cocked at a slight angle, their eyes questioning.

"Lonzo," she hissed, motioning with her head at the Terrians and at the same time sinking as low as possible in the water to hide her nakedness from the aliens' view.

"Huh?" Alonzo replied. He was startled by her sudden outburst. Then he caught sight of the Terrians and smiled sheepishly. "I'm sorry," he said. "I should've told you."

"Told me what?" she asked in confusion. "Did you know they were here?" She eyed the Terrians suspiciously.

"Yes... and no," he said. "I sensed them when they arrived. They tried to enter my head but I blocked them out. I sort of forgot about them." He shrugged. "I didn't know they were going to stay."

"Stay?" Julia cried, outraged. "You mean, they've been here all the time?" She blushed furiously and glared at the aliens. Her glare caused them to shift uncomfortably and move back a little from the edge of the pool. She wished fervently they'd just sink into the earth or disappear in the wall or whatever the Terrians did, as long as they went away. She wanted to get out of the pool and into the

meager refuge her clothes offered.

Alonzo threw her a lopsided grin. "For a while, yes," he replied. "I'm sorry, I should've told them to leave... But they are just curious."

"Curious," she repeated slowly. "I call it voyeuristic," Julia grouched.

He chuckled at that. Alonzo turned to face the Terrians and lowered his head, closing his eyes to briefly communicate with them. One of the aliens trilled back at him and with a sudden motion they raised themselves as one and sank into the ground.

"They apologize," he told Julia. "They were not aware that they were intruding. And they thank us. Like I said, they were just curious. Remember, the Terrians are all male."

"What are you saying?" With the Terrians gone from the chamber Julia felt secure enough to climb out of the pool and quickly scoot back into her clothes. She winced slightly at the feel of the rough material on her still very sensitive skin. "They don't know about sex?"

"Making love, Julia," Alonzo corrected her with a grin. "We made love."

"Okay," she admitted, pecking a quick kiss on the top of his head as he made to follow her example and climb out of the pool. "Making love, then."

"No, they don't know about it," Alonzo answered her question. "Not in our sense of the word. They're a species that don't touch, remember."

"Then how do they procreate?" Julia wondered out loud. It had been one of the many things that confounded her about the Terrians. She remembered Alonzo telling her months ago that the Terrians were all of the male variety. She had wondered about procreation then, but been too preoccupied with other things to follow up.

"I don't know," Alonzo admitted. "They tried to explain once but I didn't quite get it. I could ask them." His eyes glittered mischievously as he made to lower his head.

"No, never mind," Julia interjected quickly, another blush slowly creeping up. "Some other time." Right now, the last thing she wanted was to face the Terrians again.

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